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NORTH - SOUTH KOREA: Progress on substantive issues in the year-old unification talks has been slight, but tension on the Korean peninsula has been reduced. Moreover, the two adversaries have a more realistic appreciation of their limited ability to influence each other's policy and political processes.

The talks have proved more advantageous to Pyongyang than to Seoul. Pyongyang's principal gain has been to boost North Korea as a legitimate political entity and to move it into the mainstream of international diplomacy. More than a dozen countries have recognized North Korea since the talks began, and Pyongyang's diplomatic leverage is now such that there is a chance it may secure observer status in the UN this year or most certainly in 1974. Pyongyang is now trading on its greater international acceptability to develop additional foreign support for its proposal that US forces be withdrawn from Korea and that a mutual reduction of forces be carried out on the peninsula. Although the North Koreans have little hope of forcing a US withdrawal for the present, they may believe they can complicate US - South Korean relations over the troop issue.

Pyongyang's objective is to weaken the military underpinnings of the South Korean Government. This does not mean that the North Koreans plan renewed military aggression against the South. There are indications that Pyongyang believes a reduction in Seoul's armed strength would provide an opportunity to reduce its own military spending so that resources for heavy industrial development can be increased.

South Korea has grudgingly accepted the withering away of its once exclusive position as the representative of Korea in the free world and in major international organizations. This was a risk Seoul

accepted at the outset of the talks. Seoul's principal interest was to begin to develop a relationship with Pyongyang that would reduce the danger of North Korean military aggression. It was motivated largely by doubts about how the Nixon Doctrine would be applied to Korea and particularly about how long US troops would remain.

There was also a domestic factor. President Pak Chong-hui warned that the talks, in contributing to a less hostile North Korean image, could weaken the unity and military preparedness of the South Korean people. He cited this danger as one justification for a series of moves to reshape the society along the more authoritarian lines he has long desired. To a large extent this process is now complete. Seoul, moreover, is now more reassured about the continuation of the US troop presence and thus less concerned about new North Korean military action. Seoul's interest in the talks has therefore diminished.

Despite their differences, both Seoul and Pyongyang recognize that the big powers want a continuation of the detente on the peninsula and are capable of applying military and economic constraints to ensure there is no backsliding. Thus, for this reason alone, the talks are likely to continue, but at a reduced pace. They may yet produce some lowering of barriers to non-political contacts and cooperation between the two sides, but larger achievements are unlikely in the foreseeable future.

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LIBYA: An international youth conference sponsored by the regime will be used to promote President Qadhafi's propaganda campaign against Israel and the United States.

The conference, billed as the Socialist Union of European and Arab Youth, will convene this weekend, and the Libyan press claims it will represent organizations with a total membership of nearly 700,000. Invitations reportedly have been extended to:

- extremist groups, including the Black Muslims, the Black Panthers, and the Quebec Liberation Front;
- numerous political parties and liberation movements throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America;
- representatives from international organizations including the UN, and other guests such as OAU Secretary-General Ekangabi, Prince Sihanouk, and professionals and academicians from the US and Europe.

Although the published agenda for the conference concentrates on the role and objectives of youth and Zionist activities, President Qadhafi apparently intends to push several of his propaganda themes, including what he calls:

- the "dishonest alliance" of the major powers against the less developed countries;
- the "siege" of Zionism and imperialism imposed on the Libyan revolution.

Libyan media no doubt have exaggerated the attendance roster for the conference, but the allure of Libyan money will probably draw together a sizable conclave. In all likelihood, the conference will issue a barrage of declarations aimed primarily at condemning Tel Aviv and, secondarily, Washington.

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USSR - POLAND - THE GERMANIES: Polish and East German leaders will use Soviet party chief Brezhnev's short visits this weekend to seek reassurances that he will keep their interests in mind when he goes to Bonn next week. The East Germans, in particular, are concerned that the Soviet policy of detente may be carried out at their expense, economically and politically. Brezhnev will listen and, no doubt, offer the required reassurances, but he is unlikely to let their worries deter him from attempting to achieve a general improvement in Soviet relations with West Germany.

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